



**MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY**

**DR NOBUHLE NKABANE (MP)**

**Artisanal, Small-Scale, and Emerging Miners Symposium**

**MINTEK Auditorium, Randburg**

**11 April 2024**

Programme Director,

Chairperson of the Board of Mintek, Dr Thibedi Ramontja

CEO of Mintek, Dr Molefi Motuku and your executives

Advisor to the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, Mr G Qonde

Representatives of the various state owned entities present here

Artisanal, Small-Scale and Emerging Miners present here

Team DMRE

Distinguished Guests

As we meet here today, South Africa's ***mining industry, and the economy*** at large, is ***faced by a myriad of challenges***, both at a local level and internationally.

On the one hand, the ***rising cost of living, economic instability, and trade wars*** continue to make life difficult not only for the people of South Africa, but the world at large. On the other hand, the ***ongoing electricity interruptions and logistical constraints*** continue to hinder our country's economic growth.

As we work on permanently resolving local challenges to ensure economic growth, we are sensible to the fact that we will not be able to achieve the desired growth without the ***emergence of small and medium entrepreneurs (SMMEs)*** and the ***sustained participation of black people in general, Africans in particular, in the mainstream economy.***

Fact of the matter is that our country's ***development will be spearheaded by SMMEs***, including artisanal and small-scale miners. It is in this context, that we welcome this meeting and would like to thank the organisers for

bringing us together to have frank **discussions about the developments in this sector**, at the centre of which, are small-scale miners who must take up their rightful place in the development of the South African mining industry.

It is a well-known fact that the **African continent is endowed with significant quantities of mineral resources**, accounting for 91% of Platinum Group Metals (PGMs), 79% of phosphate, 53% of cobalt, 46% of manganese, 35% of chromite, and a substantial percentage of coal, gold, uranium, copper, and graphite.

The manner in which our country extracts its share of these mineral resources will require **maximum participation of artisanal and small-scale miners**, in particular women and young people, who are hardest hit by the scourge of **unemployment, poverty, and inequality**. Moreover, if we are to create value and grow our economy, we must also ensure that these **minerals are beneficiated locally** in order to limit the exportation of the much-needed jobs and profits to other countries.

As part of government's concerted **efforts to grow a globally competitive and transformed mining industry**, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) introduced the **Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) Policy** in 2022. At the core of this policy, is the need for all stakeholders to collaborate and work together on the training and development of artisanal and small-scale miners and empower them to mine the marginal deposits that are considered less valuable by large mining companies.

It is therefore critical for **business, communities, and government** through the *Mining Qualifications Authority, Mintek, Mine Health and Safety Council, Council for Geoscience, State Diamond Trader, South*

*African Diamond and Precious Mineral Regulator*, and other government departments to **work together in transforming the mining industry**.

We are heartened by the work done by Mintek in collaboration with the MQA in **training some of these miners**, and hope that we will see more of them becoming active participants in the industry, and ultimately compete with big mining companies.

As part of the DMRE's efforts aimed at facilitating and opening funding opportunities for these miners, in January this year, the department published an invitation for artisanal and small-scale miners to apply for the **funding that is designed to assist with Financial Provision for Rehabilitation and Capital Equipment**. In the 2023/24 financial year, we initially intended to offer financial support to at least **13 artisanal and small-scale miners**, with a majority share of the **funding reserved for women small-scale miners**. However, due to the overwhelming responses of applications that we received, we shortlisted a total of 21 projects that are eligible for financial support in collaboration with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC).

In addition, the department in partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) launched a **R400 million exploration fund**, in February this year, to assist qualifying enterprises in the mining industry to **conduct exploration work**, accelerate new mineral discoveries, increase junior miners' access to mine ore bodies, and **promote economic inclusion**. We hope to see more of you benefiting from both the **exploration fund and artisanal and small-scale miners' fund**.

Programme Director, for the artisanal and small-scale miners to derive value from the ongoing training programme, we must enhance **capacity building** by means of efficient accounting programme, compliance with

relevant legislation on governance and industrial relations, as well as a comprehensive marketing platform.

Secondly, our training programme must also focus on **market access** by assisting them to access end-consumers through integrated sourcing, sales, distribution, and marketing services.

Thirdly, we must further focus on **information and knowledge sharing** to enhance the quality, accessibility, and relevance of information or data to these miners.

Lastly, we must focus on **skills and human capacity development** by leveraging on our existing skills development programmes and research institutions for developing and piloting technological solutions and exposure to international best practices.

In conclusion, programme director, allow me to take this opportunity to **encourage all the emerging miners to seize the opportunities** intended to grow artisanal and small-scale mining, and transforming the South African mining industry.

For its part, the DMRE will continue **to provide support and assistance** in addressing the challenges faced by artisanal and small-scale miners by means of regular **workshops and information-sharing platforms** with a particular focus on historical mining provinces, including Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Northern Cape, and North West.

***I thank you.***